FINNISH DESIGNERS

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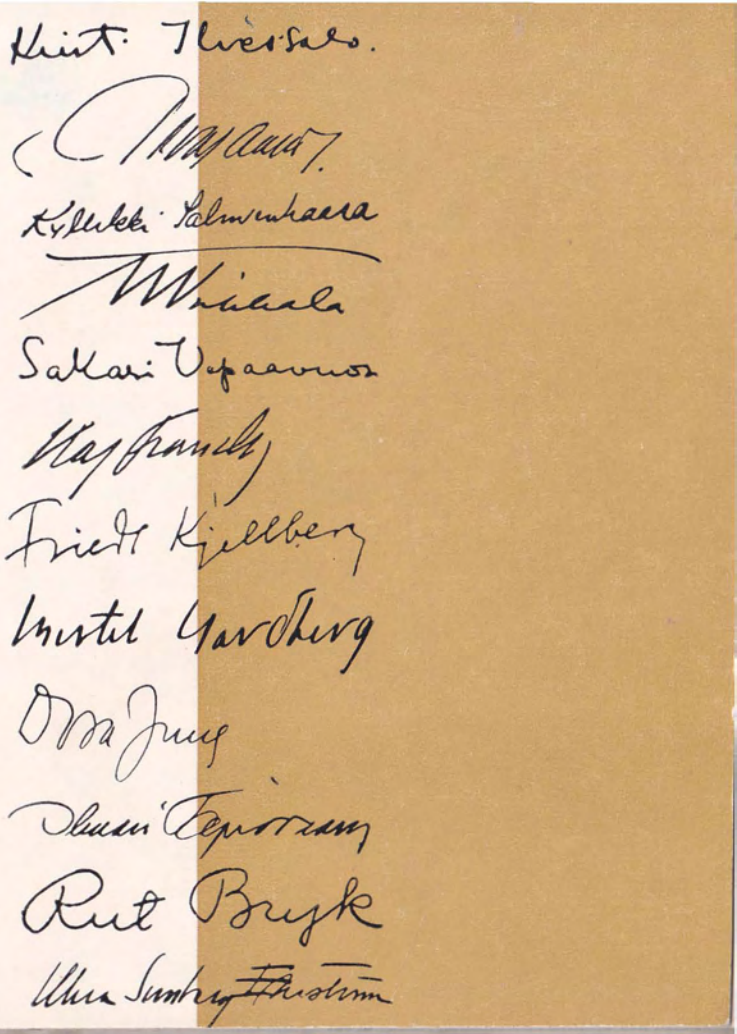


BENEDICT ZILLIACUS: FINNISH DESIGNERS

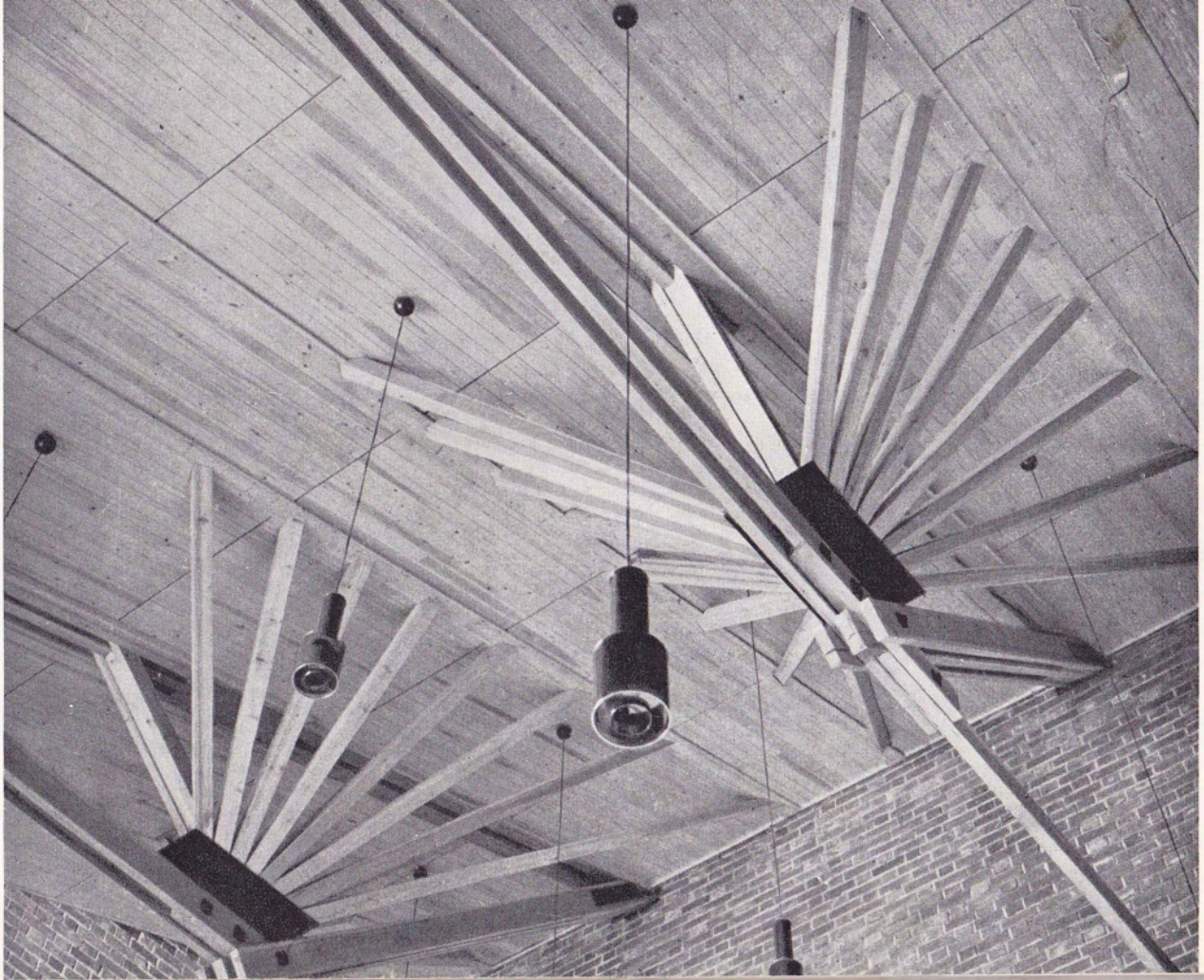
AALTO, ALVAR
ANTTILA, EVA
BOMAN, CARL-JOHAN
BRUMMER, EVA
BRYK, RUT
FRANCK, KAJ
GARDBERG, BERTEL
ILVESSALO, KIRSTI
JOHANSSON-PAPE, LISA
JUNG, DORA
KARTTUNEN, LAILA
KJELLBERG, FRIEDL
LYBECK, MARITA
MUONA, TOINI
SALMENHAARA, KYLLIKKI
SARPANEVA, TIMO
SCHILKIN, MICHAEL
SIIMES, AUNE
SIMBERG-EHRSTRÖM, UHRA
STILL, NANNY
TAPIOVAARA, ILMARI
TUUMI, RAIJA
VAPAAVUORI, SAKARI
WIRKKALA, TAPIO

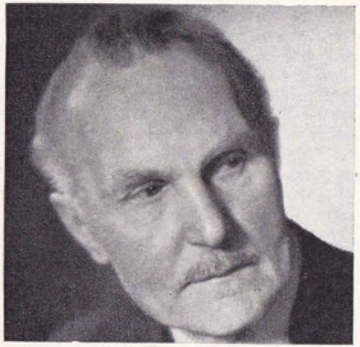
Two dozen names are here selected from among the Finnish designers who have recently won international acclaim and who have made foremost contributions to the rise of modern industrial art in Finland. These artists represent extreme variations in temperament and technique. But they are akin in one respect, in their familiarity with and deep feeling for the material with which they work. This is a quality one would like to call typical of Finnish art handicraft. It perhaps results from the fact that industrialization has never been able to break the traditions of Finnish handicraft, and that Finnish art is so young that it has not strayed from its genuine folk background into the labyrinths of conscious artistry. And it is with traditional materials — clay, textiles, and glass — that formal artistic

creation in Finland has reached its greatest heights. Among these twenty-four artists, some work in certain units, as the ceramic artists whose experiments are supported so exemplarily by the huge Wärtsilä-Arabia industry, the ryijy weavers of the Friends of Finnish Handicraft, and the artists associated with the large Karhula-Iittala glass works. Others work alone — the weavers in their own studios, the silversmiths in their private workshops, and independent furniture designers at their drafting boards. This selection is not an exclusive one; other Finnish artists can claim places in this elite group. But it is apparent that each of the twenty-four artists here chosen has made an essential contribution in the advance of Finnish industrial art toward world-wide recognition.

For ALVAR AALTO, the famous architect, there is no boundary line between architecture and applied art. City planning, building construction, designs for utilitarian objects — they are all parts of the same great social unity, the theory that Aalto puts into practice. He plans detailed interiors for the buildings he creates: furniture, lighting fixtures, textiles — „the architectonic accessories". For twenty-five years he has worked on the development of moulded wood furniture and has in his designs united maximum standardization with pure and simple beauty. At an early stage he took up the problem of proper lighting. In his pieces of glass as in much of his furniture and architecture, the same free organic form repeats itself. His example has contributed to design the world over.

Aalto,Alvar, born in 1898. Member of the Finnish Academy. Architect in 1921. Private architect's office since 1924. Founded Artek Company for center of architecturally harmonized decoration and standardized furniture in Helsinki, 1933—36, with offices in the United States, Sweden and other countries. Professor of architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1940—49. Doc. honoris causa by Princeton University, Hon. Royal College of Art etc. Personal exhibitions in London, New York, Paris, Zürich, Copenhagen and Stockholm.



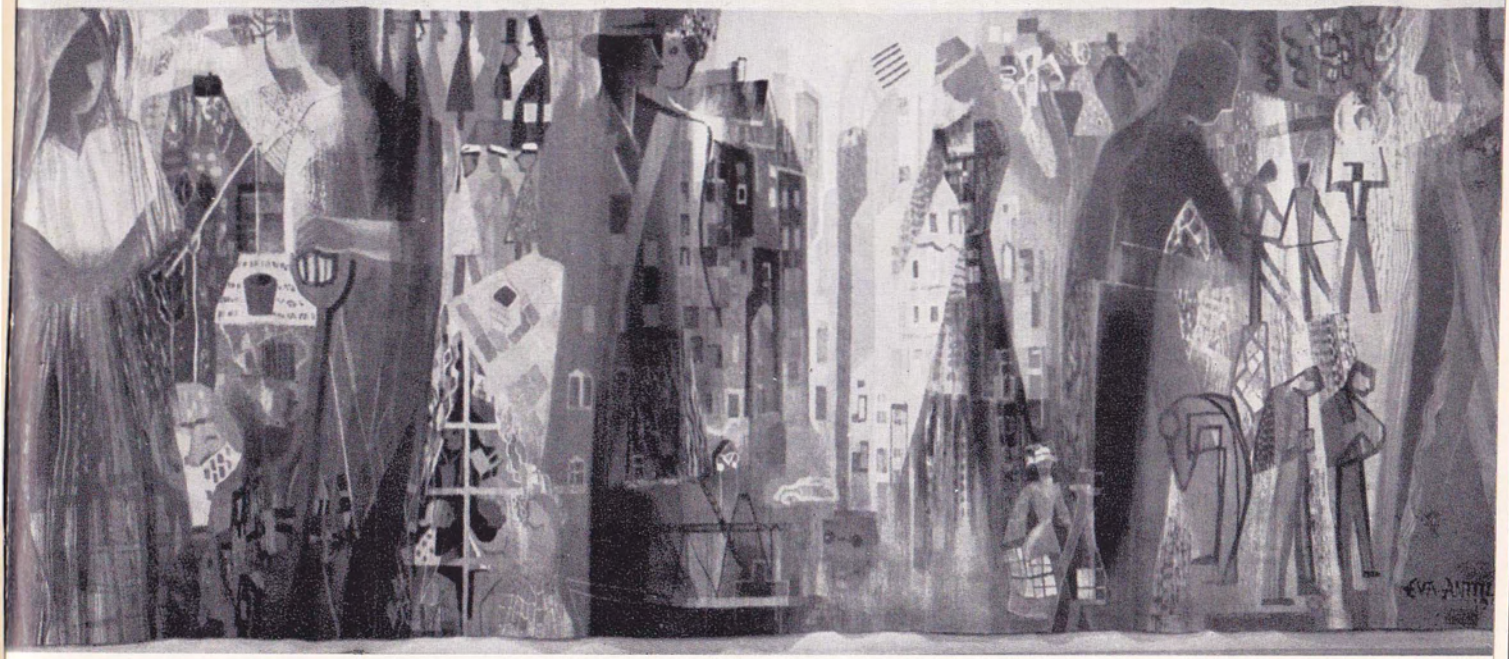


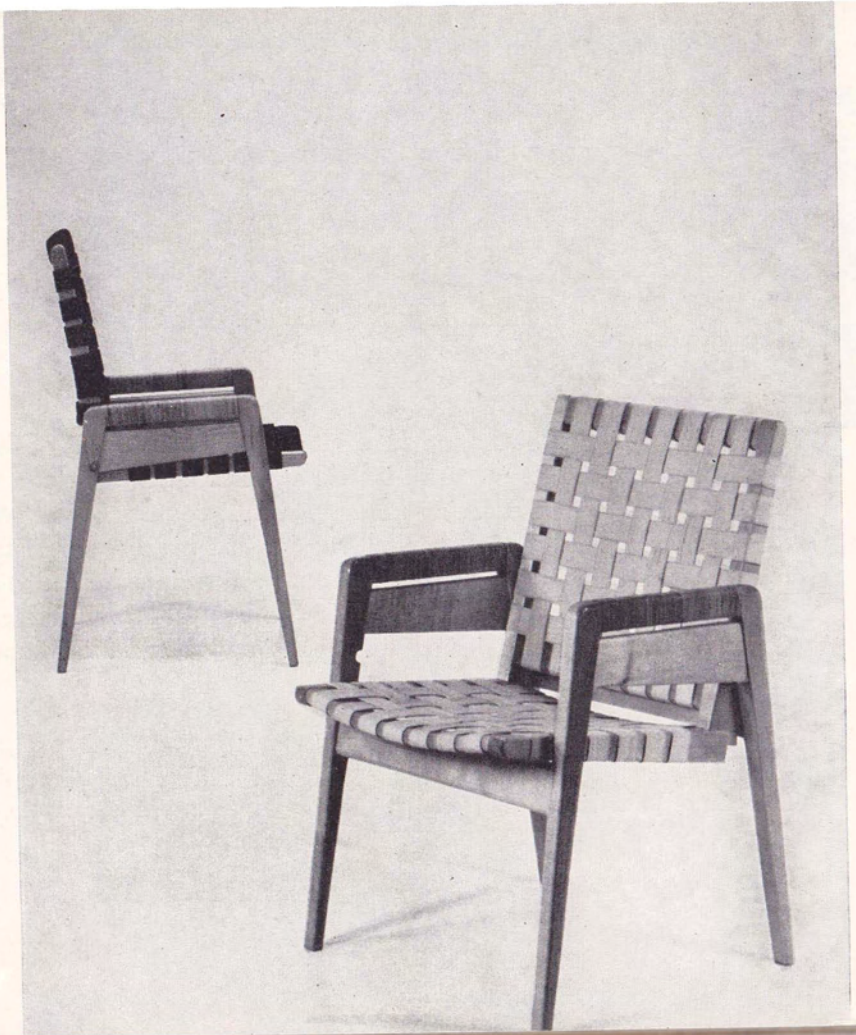
The past decades of social progress have inspired CARL-JOHAN BOMAN's best pieces of furniture. He has attempted to solve the problem of small apartments and restricted housing accommodations with light versatile pieces of furniture that take up little space. They are excellent technically and also satisfactorily fulfill reasonable esthetic requirements. Small chairs are Boman's most significant contribution, and his success in this field is a result of more than half a century of study. At the IX Triennale 1951 he won a Silver Medal.

Boman, Carl-Johan, born in 1883. Attended a professional school in Berlin and studied at the College of Applied Art there. He is now Managing Director of the firm Boman Cabinet Makers founded in 1871.

EVA ANTTILA is a painter whose „pigments" are threads and whose „brush" is a loom. In her weaving with unique technical methods she produces as sensitive pictorial effects as with oils on canvas without overstepping the border between these two forms of art. She has been most successful in her tapestry „Work and Life", a huge production full of the panorama of life, ordered by the Bank of Finland. But the greatest part of her work consists of small sensitive sketches in weaving. The artist works quite alone in her own studio.

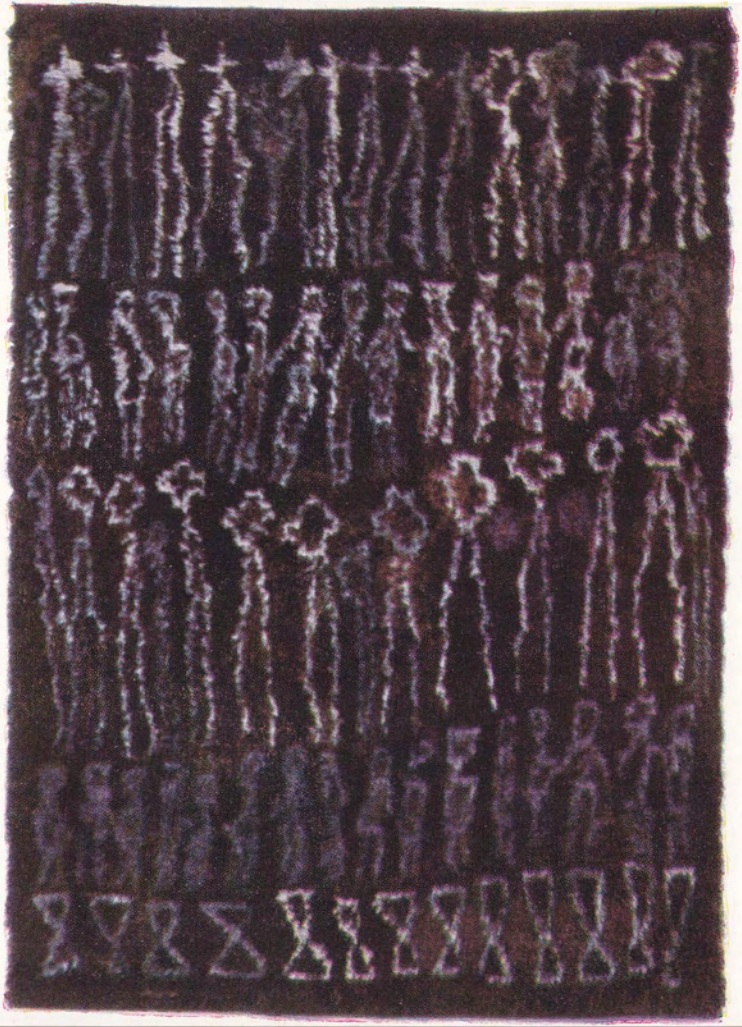
Anttila, Eva, born in 1894. Active as textile artist since the twenties. Teacher of textile art, Industrial Art Institute, 1926—28. Personal shows in London and Gothenburg in 1949. Diplome d'Honneur IX Triennale 1951.





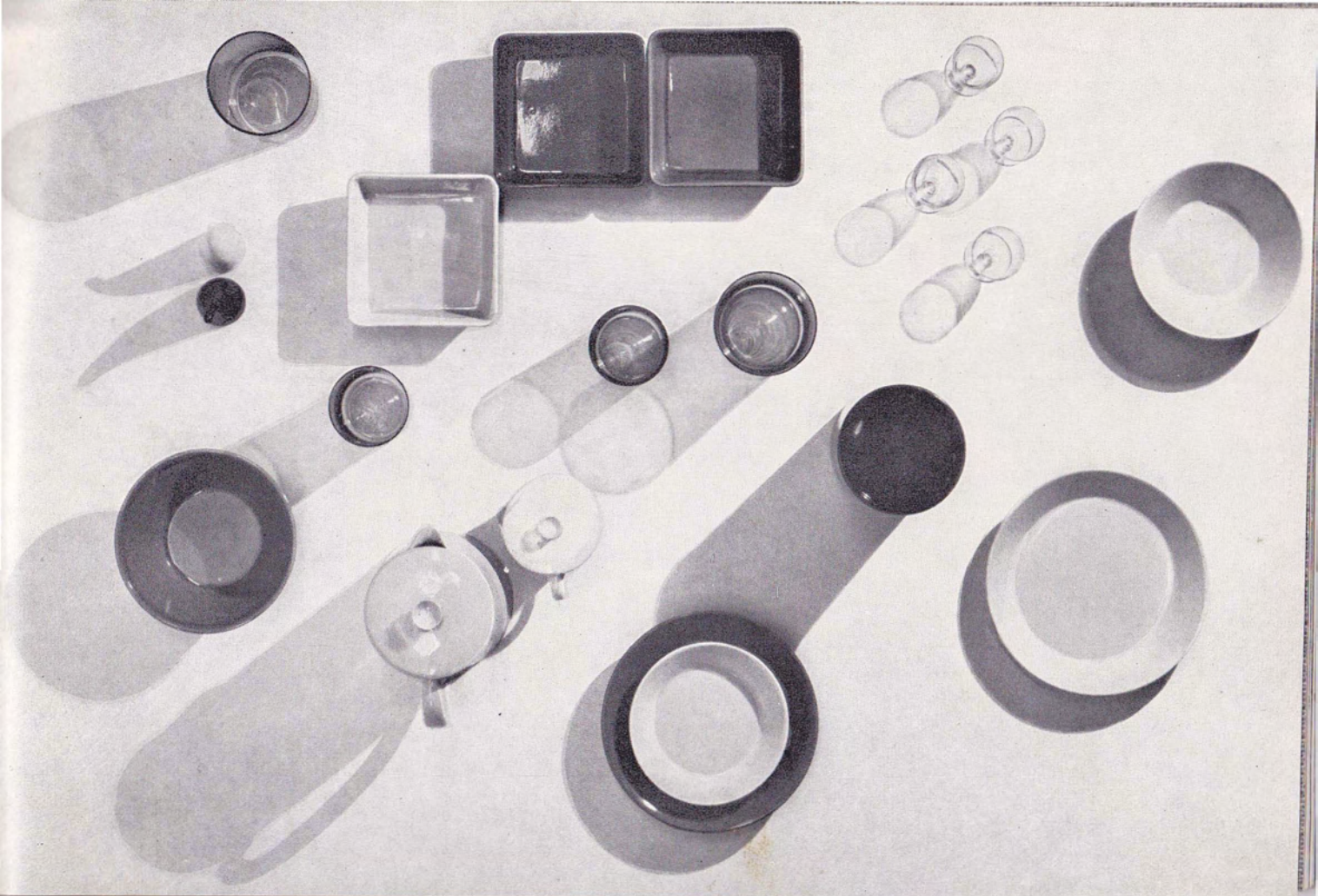
The ryijy rug is one of the most traditional Finnish products of folk handicraft. The thick hand-knotted tapestry is used as either a carpet or as a wall-hanging. In olden times, when working hours were not counted, there were several of them in each rural home. The wall-rug is still a highly appreciated product of Finnish applied art. Present-day wall-rugs are designed by a group of skifull artists, among whom EVA BRUMMER has a prominent place. She won a Grand Prix at the IX Triennale in Milan in 1951 and a Diplome d'Honneur at the X Triennale 1954.

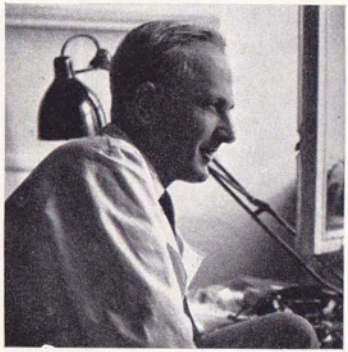
Brummer, Eva, born in 1901. Designs wall-rugs for the Friends of Finnish Handicraft. Also active as a teacher of arts and as a painter. One of her wall-rugs is displayed at the Museum of Industrial Art in Helsinki.



Using a rare, juicy, deeply-toned glaze RUT BRYK gives color to her wall plaques of chamotte clay with their naive birds, fruits, buildings, and figures of the Madonna. Among the many temperaments of Arabia's ceramic artists, she represents the picturesque. Her figures possess an irresistibly graceful charm, and her dark radiant colors are unique.

Bryk, Rut, born in 1916. Completed studies in 1939 at the Industrial Art Institute, Helsinki. Associated with Wärtsilä-Arabia since 1942. Grand Prix at IX Triennale 1951 and Diplome d'Honneur X Triennale 1954. Works purchased by the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm; the Kunstindustrimuseum in Copenhagen; the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Zurich, the Nordenfjellske museum in Trondheim; the Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza.



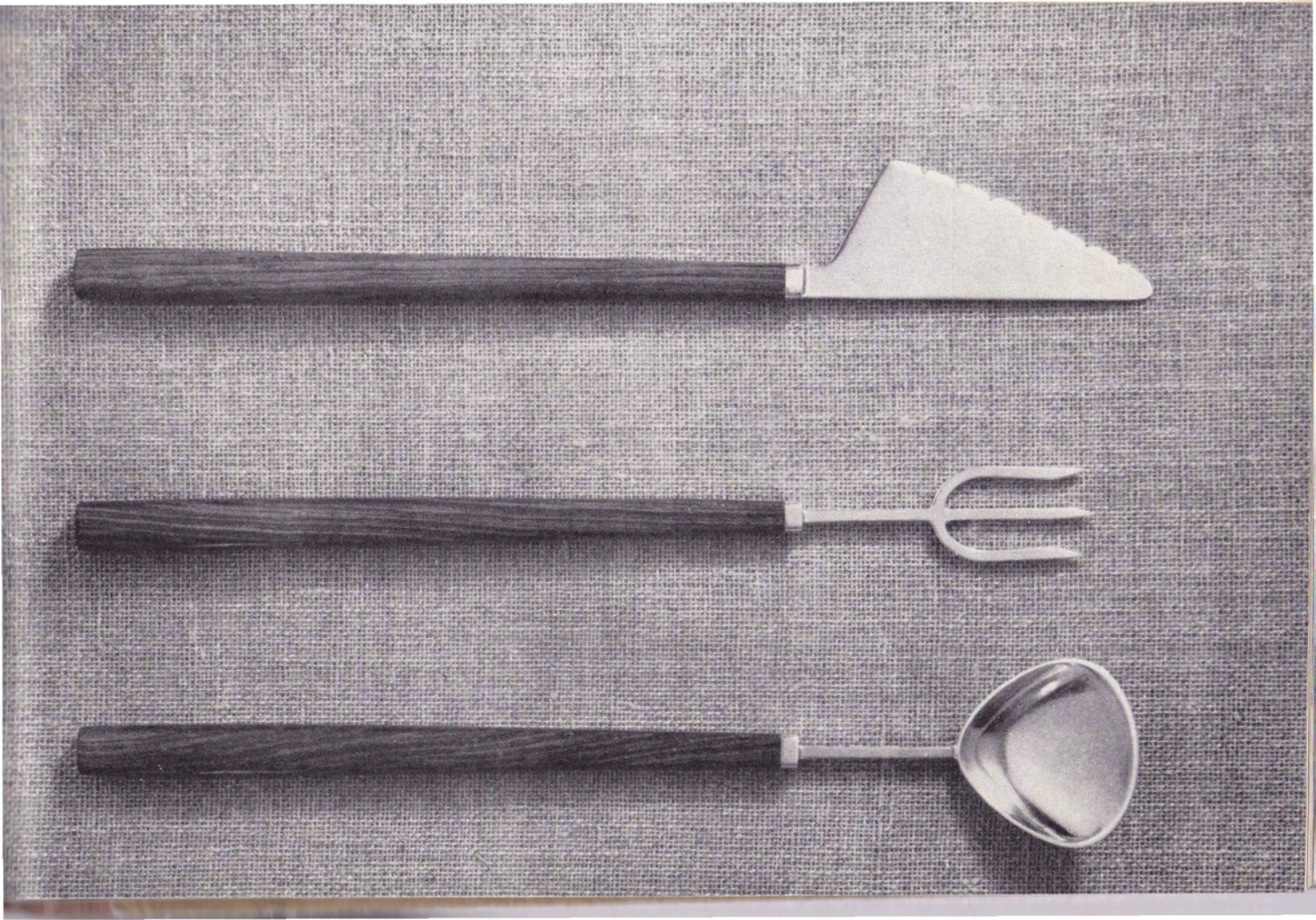


KAJ FRANCK with disrespectful good humor displays an artistic bizarreness in his pieces of art glass, while devoting himself seriously to the design of utilitarian objects. As both an artist in glass and ceramic designer he has become a revolutionary force in his home country, where useful objects were long neglected by the advanced art handicraft. Franck has declared war against matched table sets. His sets consist of supplementary pieces in different colors and with many possibilities for combination. They are a practical and inexpensive series which have quickly become popular among the Scandinavian public. In his glass also the artist prefers colors — strong, cheerful shades in his sturdy drinking-glasses, discrete smoke and oyster-grey in his simple thin soap-bubble-like vases. For his table ware and his drinking-glasses as well as for his art glass production Franck obtained two Diplomes d'Honneur at the X Triennale 1954.

Franck, Kaj, born in 1911. Completed studies in 1932 at the Industrial Art Institute, Helsingfors. Teacher there since 1945. Since 1946 designer for production at the Wärtsilä-Arabia Since 1950 art director of Wärtsilä-Notsjö Glassworks. Works purchased by Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

With the accent on hand-work, BERTEL GARDBERG enchases his modern pieces of silver and brass. His inborn feeling for metal as an art material has been developed through studies in Denmark, the country of silver. At the moment his work represents the top achievement in this field in Finland, giving rich impulse to an area of applied art that has so far been neglected here. Useful and functional objects, fashioned of the proper materials — this is the goal of Gardberg's efforts. He combines metal, whose living surface reveals the individual prints of his chasing-hammer, with leather, semi-precious stones, or rare woods. His forms are simple and pure, without striving for effect. Gardberg works alone or with only a few private pupils, so that his production has remained extremely limited. At the same time he, however, is active as a designer for domestic and foreign industry.

Gardberg, Bertel, born in 1916. Has been trained at the School for Goldsmiths and at the Industrial Art Institute in Helsingfors. Works purchased by the Nordenfjellske museum in Trondheim. Gold Medal X Triennale 1954.



With bell-like lamp-shades of aluminium and brass, LISA JOHANSSON-PAPE has created pure forms for lighting units. She makes lamps of plastic and leather of unconventionally modern and personal design, incorporating flexibility and variation in the field of light. She is a many-sided theorist of illumination, to whom has been entrusted the planning and design of lighting units for restored medieval churches as well as for new plants, hospitals, and schools. Through her pure style and her simple handling of material, she has made a place of her own within the field of Finnish applied art.

Johansson-Pape, Lisa, born in 1907. Completed studies in 1928 at the Industrial Art Institute in Helsingfors. Designed textiles for the Friends of Finnish Handicraft. Since 1937 associated with Stockmann's Department Store as designer of furniture and since 1944 as designer of lighting units. Silver Medal IX Triennale 1951 and Gold Medal X Triennale 1954. Designed the general lighting fixtures for "Design in Scandinavia" exhibition.

Centuries of folk tradition live in KIRSTI ILVESSALO's deeply colored and individualistic ryijy rugs, which have recently won international acclaim. Her textile patterns may be called in the best sense nationally Finnish. These themes are repeated in the gold jewelry she designs for the Kalevala Koru Company — a modern interpretation of primitive decorative forms from Finland's dim past. In addition to these purely artistic creations, the artist designs fabric prints for industrial production.

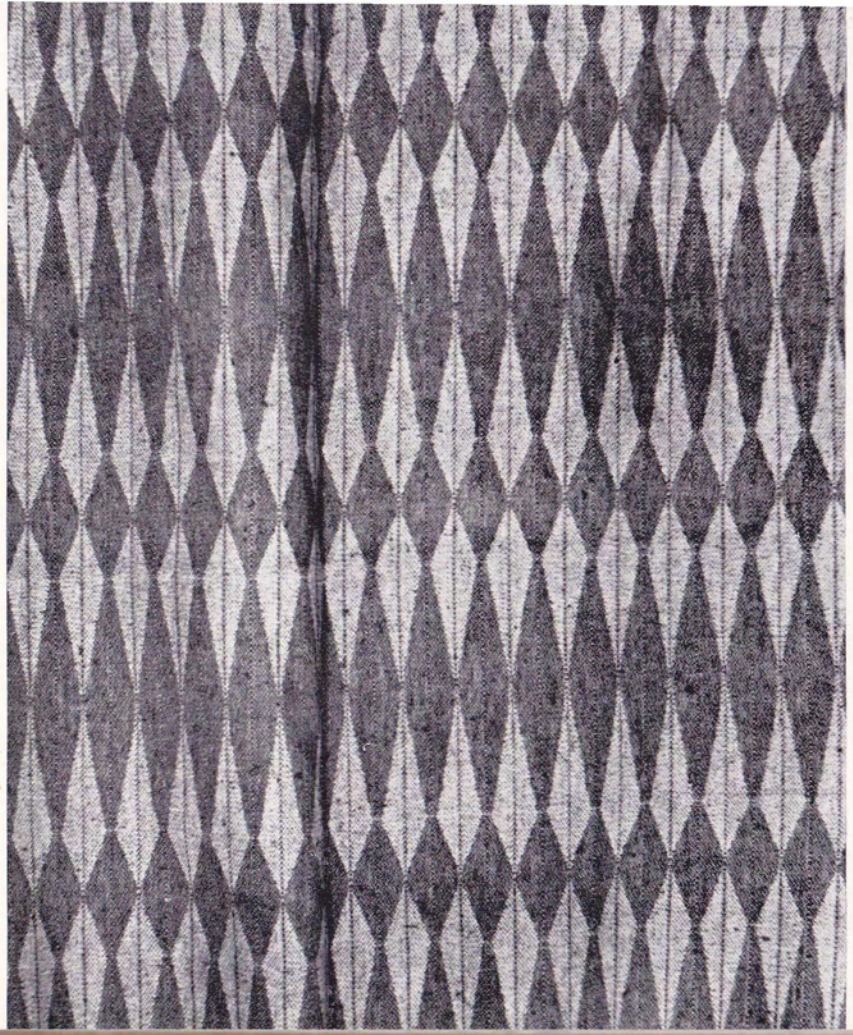
Ilvessalo, Kirsti, born in 1920. Completed studies in 1944 at the Industrial Art Institute, Helsinki. Director of Art Weaving, Friends of Finnish Handicraft, 1946—53. Independent artist since 1953. Teacher of Textile Design at the Industrial Art Institute since 1947. A rug purchased by Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Grand Prix X Triennale 1954.

DORA JUNG is a textile artist to her very fingertips. To an unusual extent her absolute control of the textile as an expressive medium is coupled with inherent artistic vision. Her best-known speciality is damask tapestry, and in this area she has improved both tools and technique to the point that she can carry out an especially demanding pattern, reaching masterful hitherto unknown effects. Her color-treatment is discrete and extremely refined, with sparse fields of color in the dominating gray; her figuration economical, firm and secure. A damask by Dora Jung brought home one of the six Grand Prix Finland won at the IX Triennale in Milan in 1951 and she repeated the feat at the X Triennale.

Jung, Dora, born in 1906. Completed studies in 1932 at the Industrial Art Institute, Helsingfors. Since 1932 she has her own studio. Works purchased by the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm; the Röhsska muséet, Gothenburg; the Nordenfjellske Museum in Trondheim.

LAILA KARTTUNEN is in charge of artistic production for the Fredrika Wetterhoff Home Handicraft Institute where most of the Finnish textile artist have received their training. In her own production she has concentrated mainly on the Finnish double-woven „täkänä" tapestries (tapestries with the design woven on both sides). In these, as in her embroideries, she builds her compositions on native folk themes and is faithful to her monumental Finnish style without regard for the fashion of the moment or foreign influences. Her work, as both teacher and practicing artist, is independent, honest, and lucid.

Karttunen, Laila, born in 1895. Attended the Drawing School of the Turku Art Association and the Industrial Art Institute in Helsinki. Director of Art Weaving, Friends of Finnish Handicraft, 1930—40. Since 1940 teacher of drawing and art director at the Fredrika Wetterhoff Home Handicraft Institute. Personal shows. Silver Medal IX Triennale 1951, Gold Medal X Triennale 1954.



FRIEDL KJELLBERG has been successful with glazes of celadon and „sang de bœuf", yet she is outstanding in her work with white porcelain. Her bowls and mocca sets in the difficult „rice grain" technique have won great recognition far outside Finland. Recently, she has been making table sets without decoration — pieces whose nobility lies in the superbly simple form and in the warm bone-like luster of the porcelain.

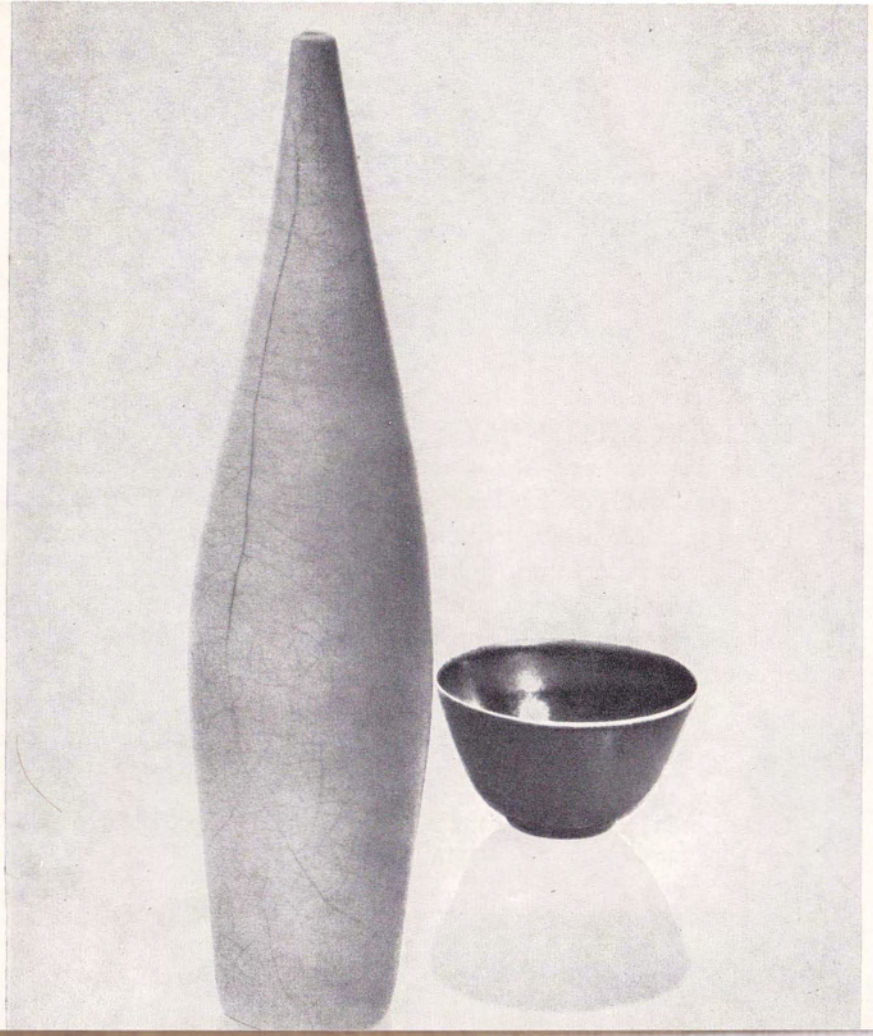
Kjellberg-Holzer, Friedl, born in 1905. Studied at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Graz, Austria. Associated with Wärtsilä-Arabia since 1924. Works purchased by teh Nationalmuseum in Stockholm; H.M. the King of Sweden's collections; the Röhsska muséet in Gothenburg; the Stedelijk in Amsterdam; the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Zurich; the Nordenfjellske museum in Trondheim; the Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza. Gold Medal X Triennale 1954.

A good representative of Finnish ceramic artists independent of a great industrial plant is MARITA LYBECK. From her kiln come practical items of soft faïence and especially utilitarian fire-proof objects. Despite her difficulties in competing with large producers, she has at an early stage marked the way toward unconventional yet practical forms for table sets. She has given the native Finnish red clay a place of honor with her skilful use of its possibilities as a style medium. Mrs. Lybeck has also worked with woven fabrics, principally carpets and furniture materials.

Lybeck, Marita, born in 1906. Attended the Industrial Art Institute in Helsingfors. Studied at the Art School of the University of Helsingfors and in Paris. Private work-shop since 1938. Silver Medal X Triennale 1955.

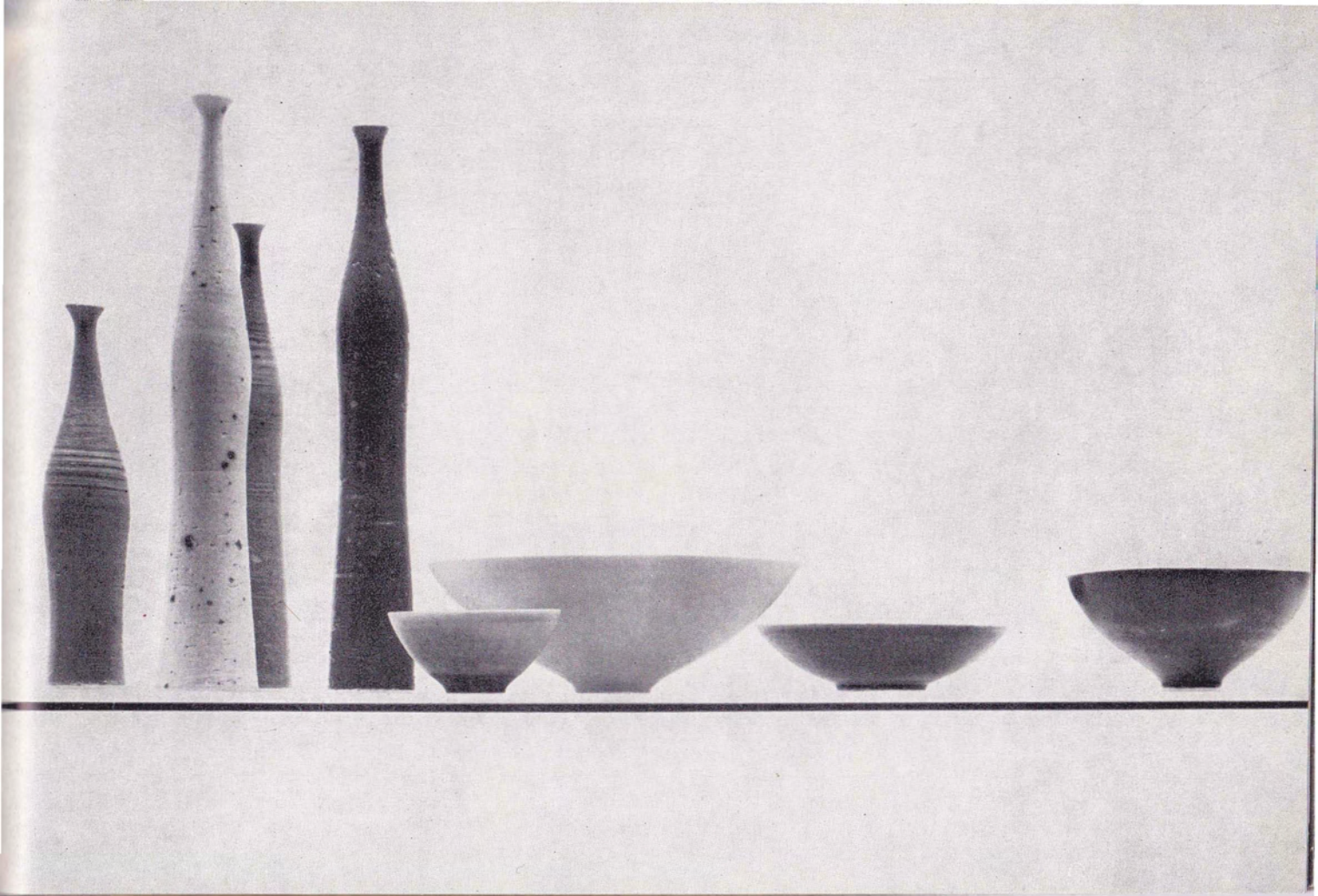
Very close to genuine Finnish nature is TOINI MUONA, whose ceramic production varies from straw to stone, from light tenderness to rich force. Her work is robust in the Finnish way but at the same time subtle, and her best pieces are strong in both form and glaze. Among these pieces we may include a series of tall, organically curved straw-like vases, created some years ago, as well as her thin, small bowls and large, rough dishes, in whose glaze her infallible intuition has brought forth the most fascinating results.

Muona, Toini, born in 1904. Completed studies at the Industrial Art Institute in Helsinki. Associated with Wärtsilä-Arabia since 1931. Gold medals in various international exhibitions. Works purchased by the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, the Röhsska muséet in Gothenburg; H.M. the King of Sweden's collections; the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Zurich; the Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza; the Museum of Applied Art in Helsinki; Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Gold Medal X Triennale 1951 and Diplome d'Honneur X Triennale 1954.



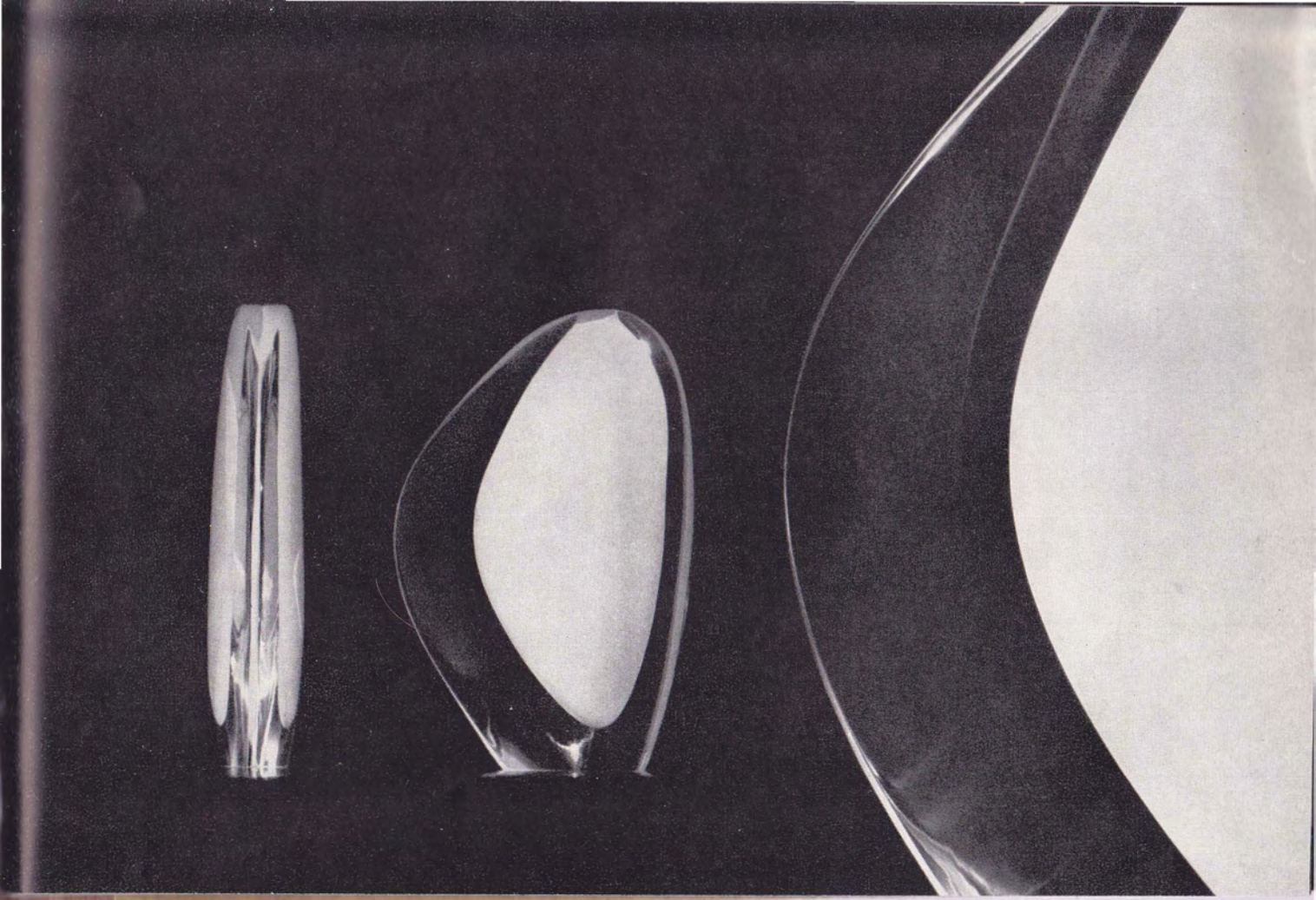
KYLLIKKI SALMENHAARA — at the moment perhaps the foremost name in Finnish ceramics — has been clearly inspired by Finnish nature. She gives her bowls and her softly shaped vases a surface reminiscent of birch bark, autumn leaves, reindeer lichen or the original pattern in Finnish granite. Her art, however, is not pointedly national: it has full universality. Salmenhaara represents purely ceramic creation, the mass, form and glaze making a complete whole just as her different pieces together show unusual homogeneity and quality of production.

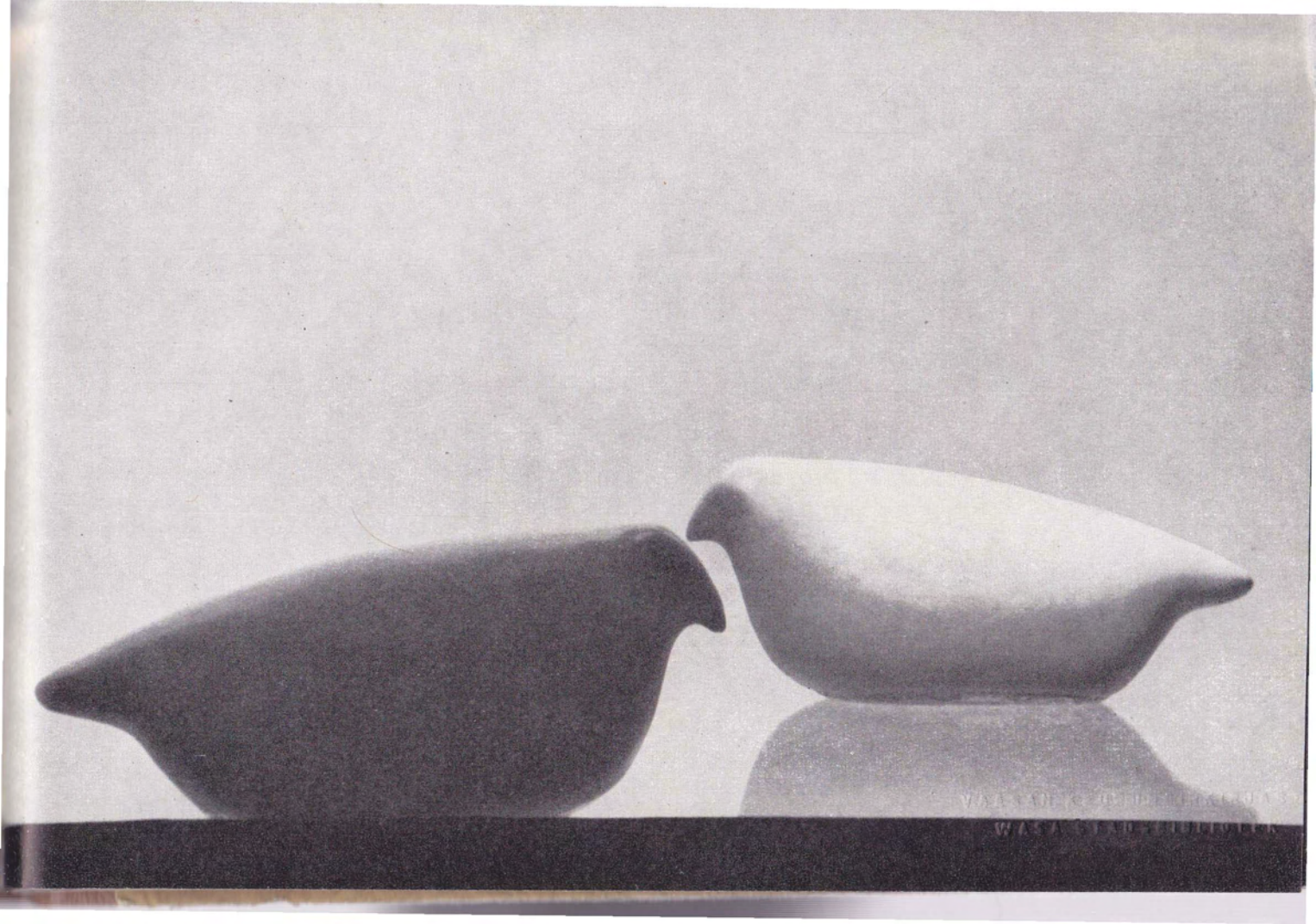
Salmenhaara, Kyllikki, born in 1915. Completed studies in 1943 at the Industrial Art Institute, Helsinki. Associated with Wärtsilä-Arabia since 1946. Works purchased by the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Zurich; the Nordenfjellske museum in Trondheim; the Museo delle Ceramiche in Faenza; Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Silver Medal IX Triennale 1951 and Diplome d'Honneur X Triennale 1954.



The quick, hot process of glassblowing and its cool, water-clear result are a fascinating contrast. The artist must perhaps possess a certain dualism: intuition and feeling on one side, cold calculation of technical possibilities on the other. TIMO SARPANEVA is fully familiar with the technique of glass working, and he has enriched it with his own inventions. While the graphic artist in him creates lines and contours with logical equation — beauty in a mathematical curve — his intuition makes the pieces live, gives them a changing form at each new visual angle, the curved lenses catching reflections of light and the world around. Sarpaneva is also a talented and unconventional graphic and textile artist, as well as a skilful and sought after exhibition planner.

Sarpaneva, Timo Tapani, born in 1926. Completed studies in 1950 at the Industrial Art Institute, Helsinki. Associated with the Iittala glassworks since 1950. Since 1953 Teacher of Composition and Textile Printing at the Industrial Art Institute. Works purchased by Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the Nordenfjellske Museum in Trondheim; the Stedelijk in Amsterdam; The Museum of Modern Art of New York. Silver Medal IX Triennale 1951 and Grand Prix X Triennale 1954.



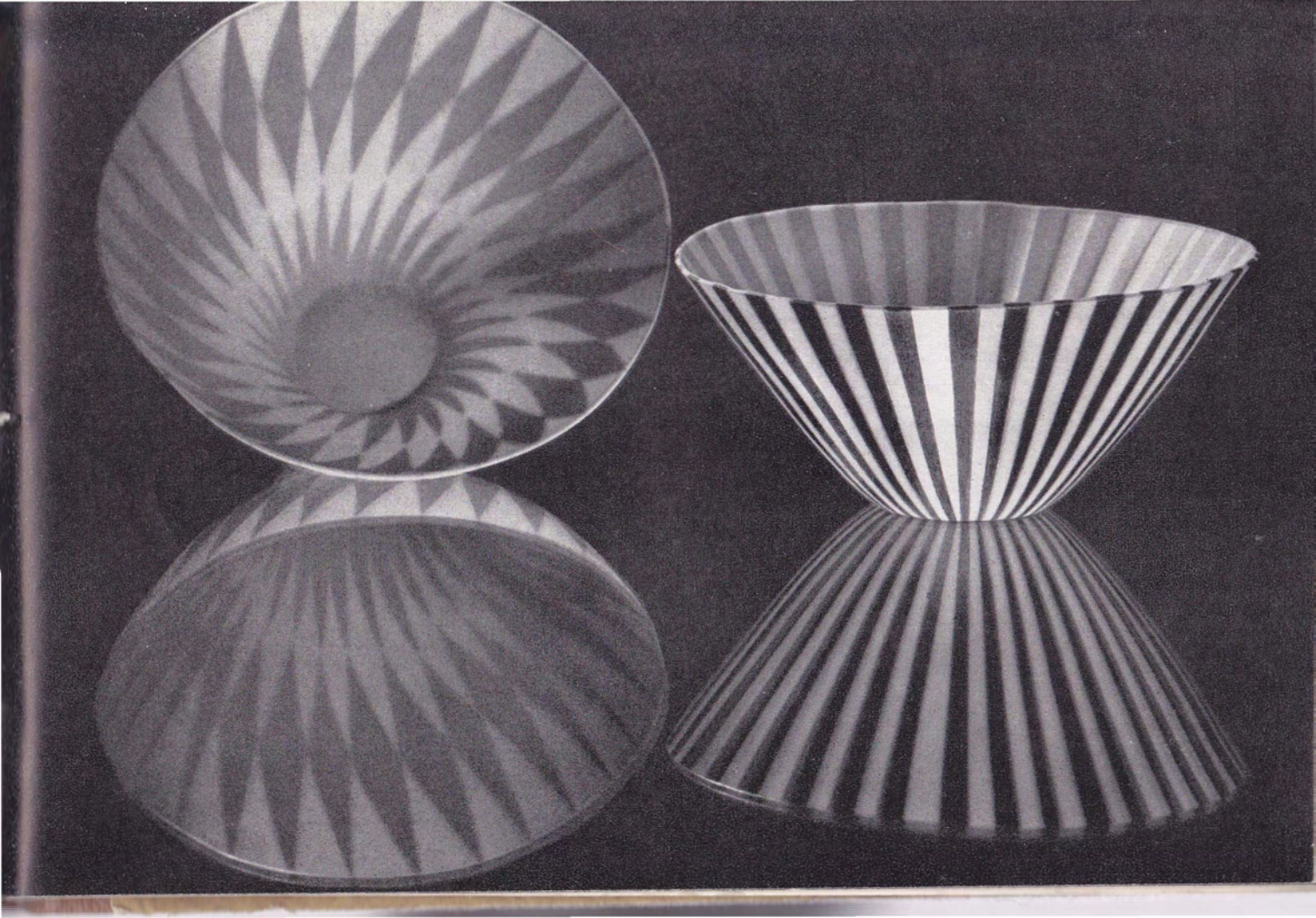


Among the purely ceramic and purely decorative products of Arabia's studios, MICHAEL SCHILKIN's works stand apart in their representation of sculptural talent. His animal figures have shown development from a naturalistic manner toward more cultivated stilization in a powerful masculine spirit. In his own country he has been sought after to create monumental works, particularly great ceramic reliefs as decoration of exterior and interior architecture. One of his reliefs is at the main entrance of the Arabia plant itself.

Schilkin, Michael, born in 1900. Attended the Industrial Art Institute in Helsingfors. Associated with Wärtsilä-Arabia since 1936. Works purchased by the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm; the Röhsska muséet in Gothenburg; the Nordenfjellske Museum in Trondheim; the Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza. Diplome d'Honneur IX Triennale 1951 and Silver Medal X Triennale 1954.

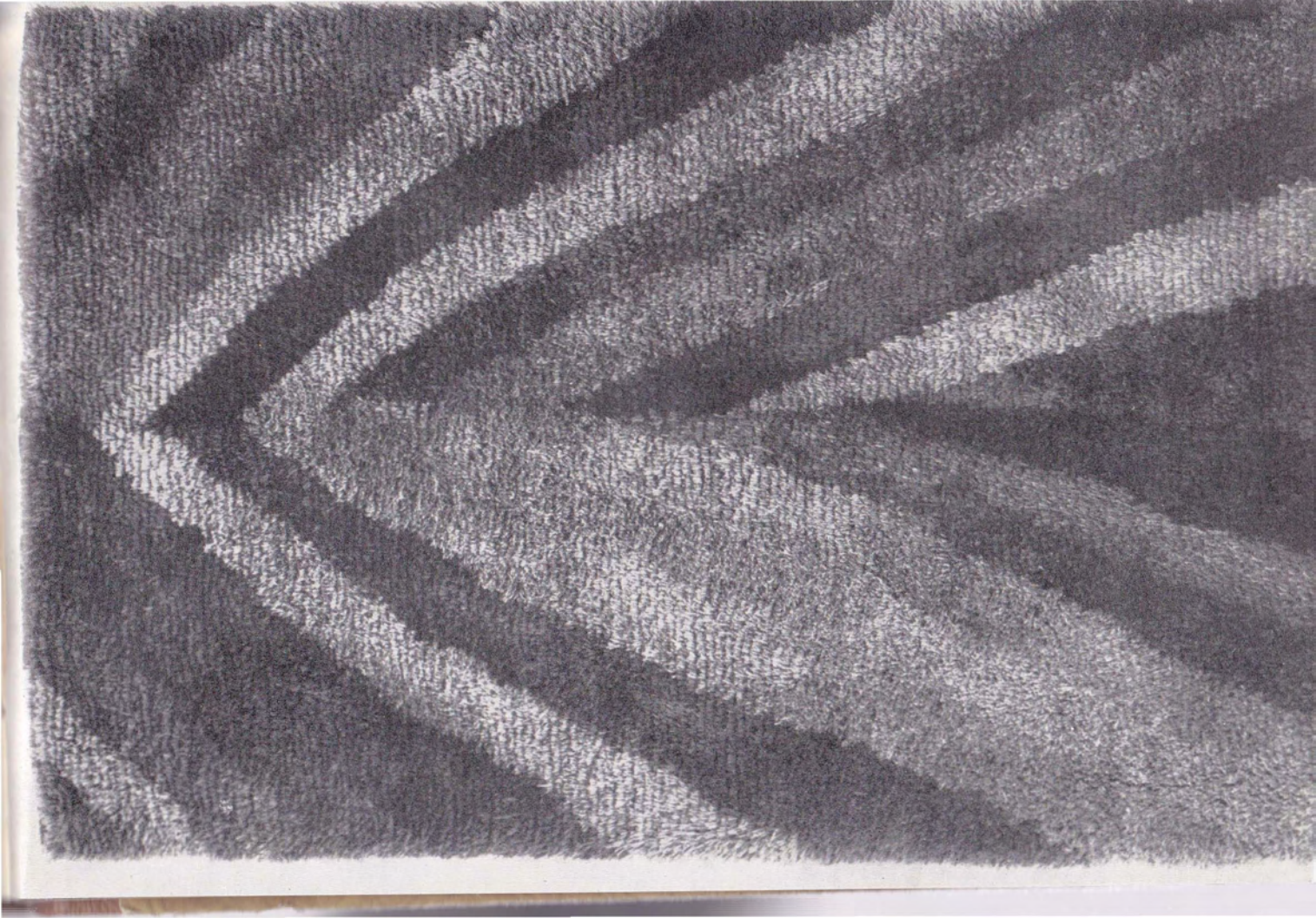
Egg-shell thin porcelain vases with an ingenious relief pattern of changing transparency — extremely difficult to work and extremely delicate in artistic effect — are AUNE SIIMES' essential contribution to the production of the Wärtsilä-Arabia Co. She previously worked also with colorful glazes on chamotte and stoneware. But by her fragile, precious objects her name as a ceramic artist has been made in white, pink or cobalt blue-and-white porcelain, as well as by her unique porcelain costume jewelry.

Siimes, Aune, born in 1909. Attended the Industrial Art Institute, Helsinki. Associated with Wärtsilä-Arabia since 1932. Works purchased by the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm; the Victoria and Albert Museum in London; the Röhsska muséet in Gothenburg; the Stedelijk in Amsterdam; the Museum at Tromsø; the Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza; H. M. the King of Sweden's Collection. Gold Medal IX and X Triennale.



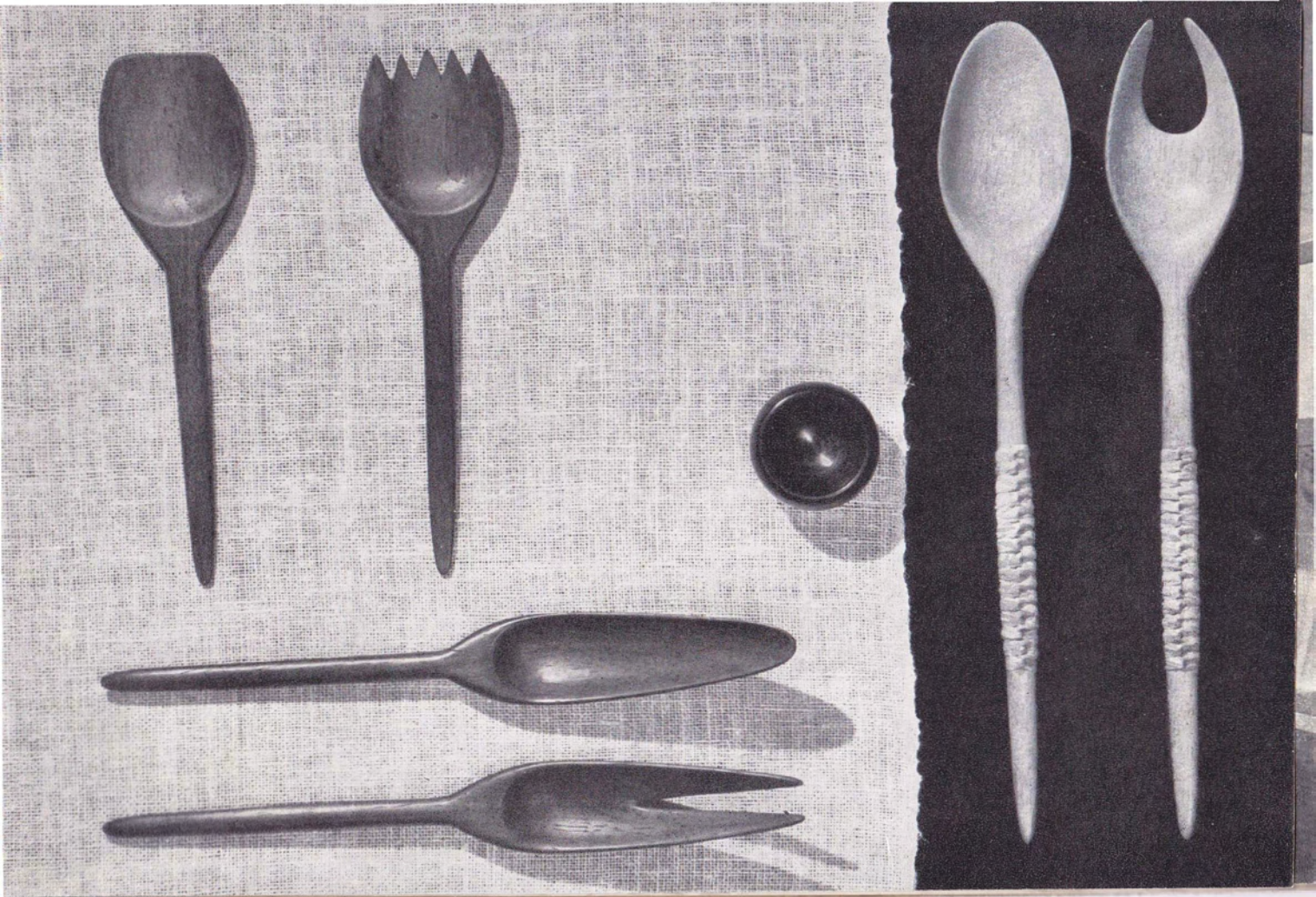
UHRA SIMBERG-EHRSTRÖM is the most noted colorist among the Finnish representatives of the art of ryijy-weaving, with an individual and personal color scale giving her entire production an unusually homogeneous stamp. Her color scale is soft and subdued, including principally shades of brown, green, gray and lilac. Mrs. Simberg-Ehrström's artistic achievements are divided between her designs of ryijy rugs for the Friends of Finnish Handicraft and her designs for industrial production of domestic wool — fabrics, shawls, scarves and plaids. The artist has also been successful with her tapestries and altarpieces. The funny animal figures she makes of seal fur may be taken as a gay little twist in her otherwise sober and serious production.

Simberg-Ehrström, Uhra, born in 1914. Attended the Industrial Art Institute, Helsingfors and studied at the Academy of Art. Artistic collaborator at the Domestic Wool Co. and artistic adviser at the Norna Home Industries Co. Silver Medal IX Triennale 1951, Diplome d'Honneur X Triennale 1954.



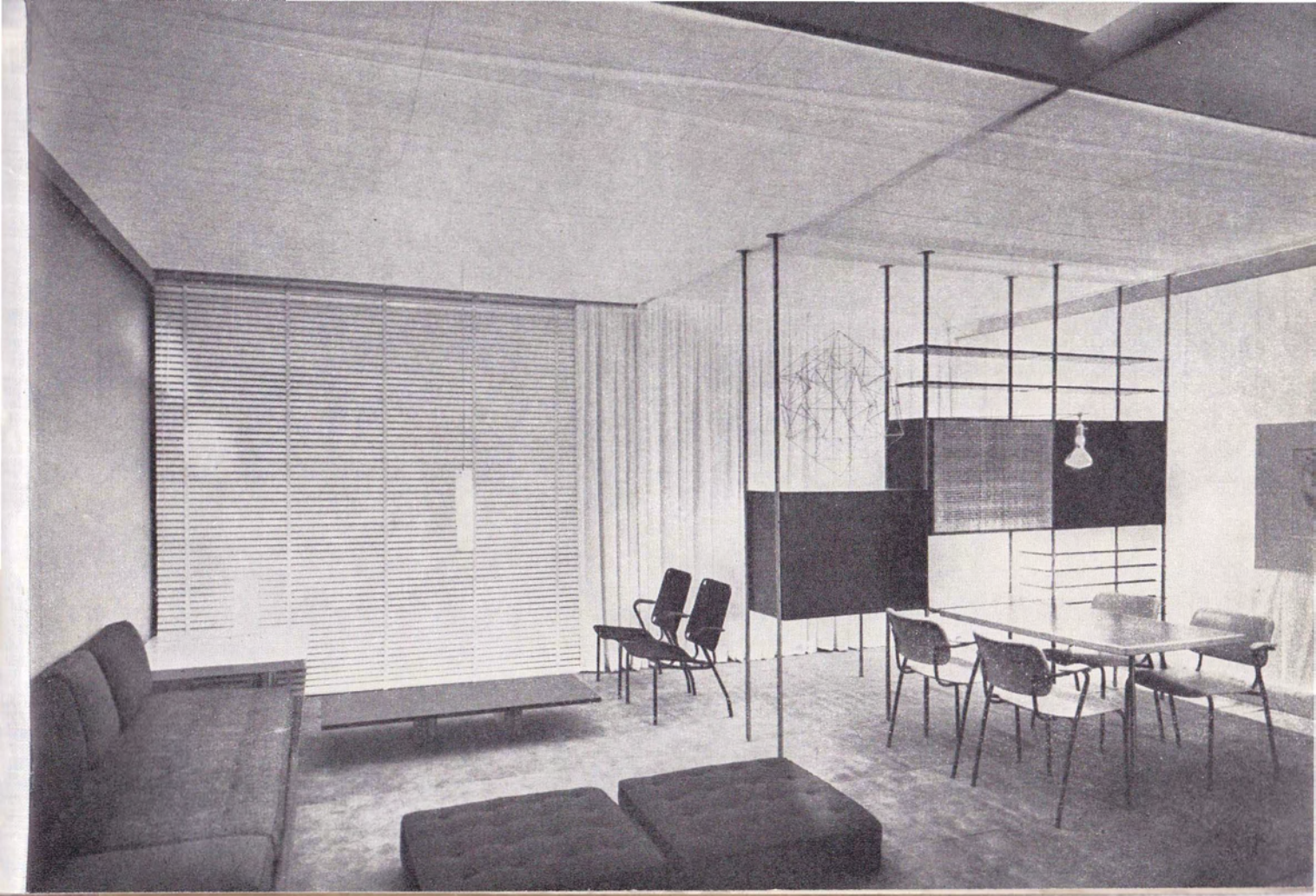
Although wood dominates industrial and daily life in Finland and wood-carving is one of the country's traditional folk handicrafts, except for furniture designers only a few Finnish artists work in wood. One of these few is NANNY STILL. This young artist actually works at the Riihimäki glassworks, where she devotes herself partly to the making of art glass and partly to the development of new forms for everyday glassware. But at the same time she has become interested in wood-carving as a hobby, and it is here that her sense of form is best displayed. Her salad bowls, forks and spoons and other pieces in noble woods, such as Paddauk and Brasilian Rosewood, have attracted attention in exhibitions on both sides of the Atlantic. For her wood carving she won the Diplome d'Honneur at the X Triennale 1954.

Still, Nanny, born in 1926. Completed studies in 1949 at the Industrial Art Institute, Helsingfors. Associated with the Riihimäki glassworks since 1949.



At the Industrial Art Institute ILMARI TAPIOVAARA teaches his pupils to think constructively. The chairs through which he has made himself best known as a designer reveal that he has much to contribute in that field; be the material wood or metal, the constructive thought in his pieces is strong and clear. Tapiovaara has worked especially on chairs for overseas export, i.e., pieces that can be dismantled and packed, as well as auditorium chairs with stress on ease of stacking. For both these functions he has developed styles, which have almost become classical, with great practicality for the Finnish woodworking industry. His most noted recent designs have been in tubular steel — in the same cool, airy spirit as his interiors. At the IX Triennale Tapiovaara won one Gold Medal and at the X Triennale two.

Tapiovaara, Ilmari, born in 1914. Attended the Industrial Art Institute, Helsinki. In 1951 he became head of the Department of Interior Decoration at the Institute. He has had his own design office since that year. Visiting Professor in charge of Product Design Section, Illinois Institute of Technology in 1952—53.

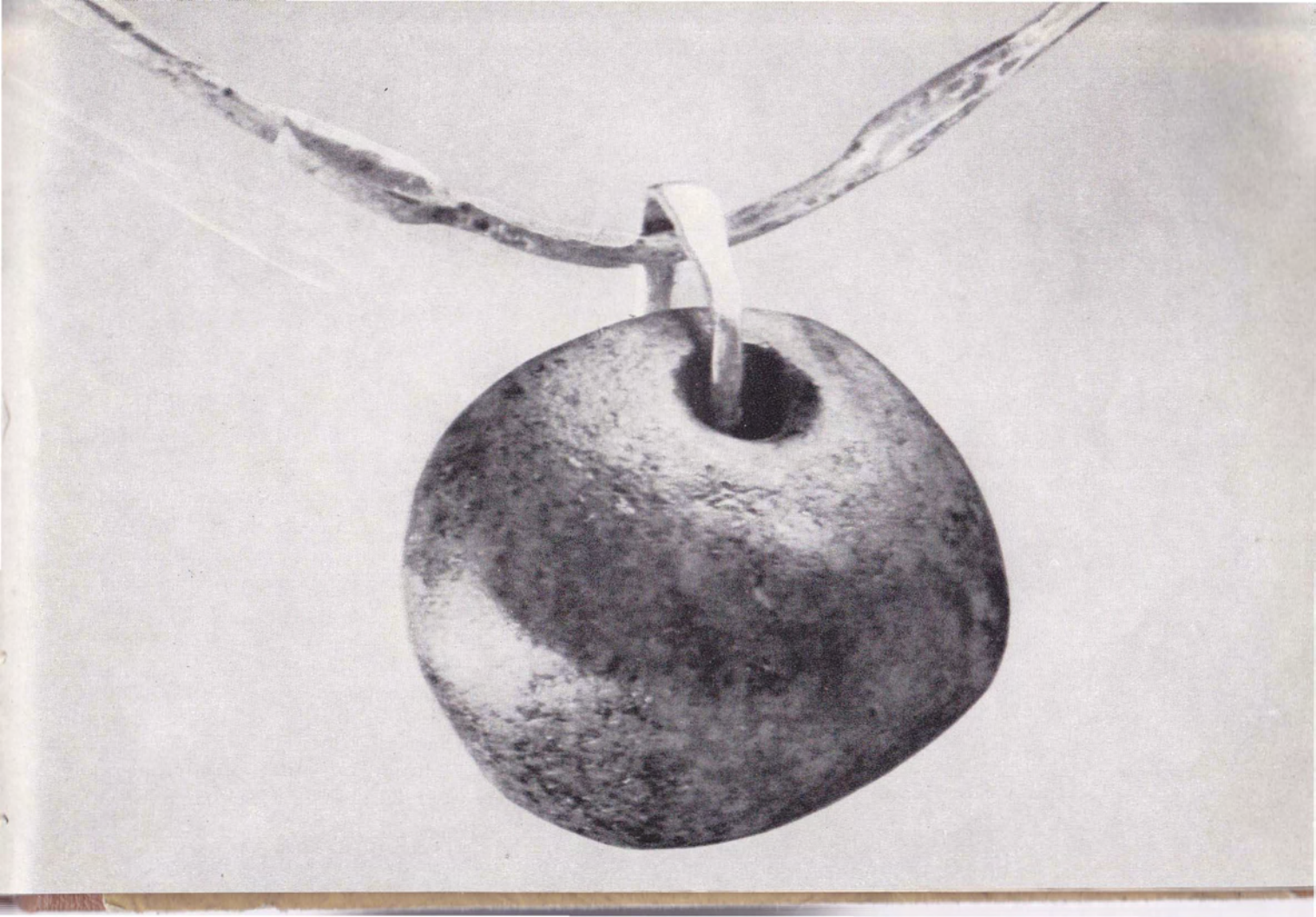


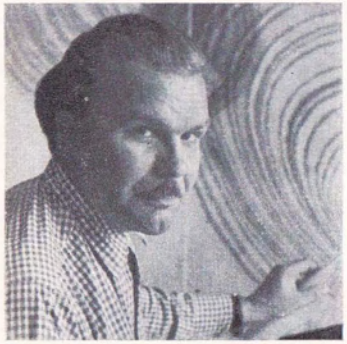
A harsh and solid, sparse and yet fascinating style characterizes RAIJA TUUMI's ceramic art. She prefers to work with large forms in coarsely dimensioned stoneware, to which she gives a roughened surface and a glaze dominantly of verdigris green and rusty brown shades. Her twisted forms are as simple as possible, and it is in this absolute simplicity that the tangible charm and power of her production lie.

Tuumi, Raija, born in 1923. Completed studies in 1949 at the Industrial Art Institute in Helsinki. Associated with Wärtsilä-Arabia since 1949.

In his abstract figures in chamotte and stoneware, SAKARI VAPAAVUORI is half sculptor and half ceramic artist — a position that has its difficulties. He works indefatigably along this line supported by Arabia. He also makes jewelry of unpolished semi-precious Finnish stones in a consciously primitive spirit derived from the Finnish Stone Age, and in the best of these pieces attains considerable artistic effect for which he was awarded a Diplome d'Honneur at X Triennale 1954.

Vapaavuori, Sakari, born in 1920. Completed studies in 1945 at the Industrial Art Institute, Helsinki. Workshop of his own in Helsinki, 1945—47. Associated with Wärtsilä-Arabia since 1947.





TAPIO WIRKKALA is a many-sided artist. A sculptor, a draftsman, a color-artist, an imaginative exhibition designer, a skillful wood-carver, he is also well acquainted with that process which creates a shimmering glass vase from a fistful of sand. This versality is also revealed in his pieces of glass — paper-thin „chanterelle" vases and heavily dimensioned crystal, forms brutal and gently sensitive. Wirkkala's name is also associated with the original pieces, beautiful in form, made of laminated airplane veneer, for which he received one of his three Grand Prix at the IX Triennale 1951. The others were awarded for his light fittings of glass and for the most outstanding exhibition set-up. In 1954 at the X Triennale he was, once more, the only artist to achieve the same high distinction winning three Grand Prix, one for the exhibition set-up, one for glass and the only Grand Prix awarded in sculpture.

Wirkkala, Tapio, born in 1915. Completed studies at the Industrial Art Institute, Helsinki, in 1935. Associated with the Karhula-Iittala Glassworks since 1947. Art director at the Industrial Art Institute in Helsinki 1951—1955 Lunning Prize 1951. Works purchased by the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm; the Röhsska musćet in Gothenburg; the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Zurich; the Nordenfjellske museum in Trondheim; The Museum of Modern Art in New York; The Metropolitan Museum in New York; Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

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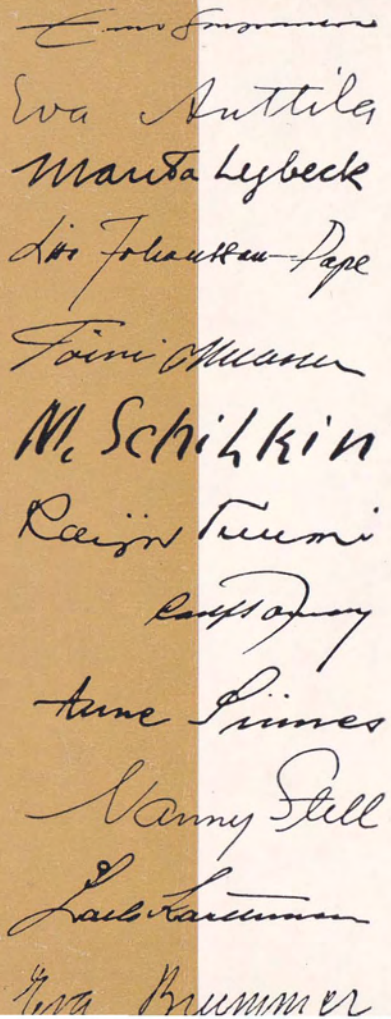

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